Re-Positioning Age Friendly Communities: Opportunities to Take AFC Mainstream

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A French translation of this document is also available.

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List of Acronyms

AFC	Age Friendly Communities
ALC	Active Living Communities
ALR	Active Living Research
AODA	Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act AODA
CaGBC	Canada Green Building Council
CAP	Clean Air Partnership
CFC	Child Friendly Cities
CMHC	Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
CNU	Congress for the New Urbanism
CUI	Canadian Urban Institute
HC	Healthy Communities
HSFC	Heart Stroke Foundation of Canada
IDGO	Inclusive Design for Getting Outdoors
LEED ND	Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design for Neighborhood Development
OPPI	Ontario Professional Planners Institute
PHAC	Public Health Agency of Canada
PPS	Provincial Policy Statement
RWJF	Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
TDM	Transportation Demand Management
TND	Traditional Neighbourhood Development
TOD	Transit-oriented Development
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WHO	World Health Organization
WHO SC	World Health Organization Safe Communities

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1.0 Introduction

The Division of Aging and Seniors of the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) retained the Canadian Urban Institute to prepare this research report to determine the extent to which the concept of Age Friendly Communities (AFC) complements or is consistent with other mainstream planning concepts such as Smart Growth and Healthy Cities.

Acknowledging that planners and others responsible for decisions affecting the built environment are constantly challenged to adopt new ideas and adjust how they respond to issues such as demographic change, PHAC plans to prepare a publication that presents the Age Friendly concept in a broader context, potentially illustrating how the principles of AFC can be either embedded or structured to complement other paradigms such as Smart Growth, Healthy Communities (HC) and Child Friendly Planning.

This report is intended to provide the basis such for a publication, which would be aimed at a target audience of municipal planners, decision makers and the extensive network of private consultants who advise the development community. The goal is to identify ways to help move AFC into the mainstream of planning-related discourse.

2.0 The Purpose of the Report

The Age Friendly Communities initiative was introduced in Canada in 2007 following cooperation between PHAC and the World Health Organization (WHO). A number of pilot communities committed to implement AFC in Canada, and that work is continuing. In a relatively short period of time, the concept has gained popularity across the country, mostly as a result of interest shown by organizations like Seniors Secretariats and social agencies with a mandate to address the needs of older Canadians. For the most part, the concept has found favour with public health and community service departments and agencies. There has been limited take up, however, among municipal planning departments and other agencies responsible for managing the built environment.[1]

Feedback from the planning community suggests that because many of the concepts embedded in AFC are also addressed in other planning paradigms such as Smart Growth, Healthy Communities, New Urbanism and others, AFC may be perceived as duplicating effort or possibly as diverting effort away from the pursuit of other competing priorities. A key purpose of this report, therefore, is to determine the degree to which AFC can be viewed

[1] This assertion is based on an informal survey conducted by the Canadian Urban Institute in 2008. It would be useful to quantify and classify municipal initiatives in a formal way.

as complementary to and compatible with mainstream planning initiatives.

Organizations such as Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), the Ontario Professional Planners Institute (OPPI), Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada (HSFC) and others have produced excellent reports on elements of the material covered by AFC. To date, however, each new paradigm has been presented independently or at the least, as an additional set of ideas to be incorporated into common practice. As discussed at a March 2010 workshop organized by PHAC, there is a risk is that the full benefits of the thinking behind AFC may not be realized if AFC is perceived as "yet another concept" to be integrated into professional practice.

2.1 Methodology

The research team undertook a literature review of ten relevant planning concepts [2] and from this identified a set of insights. From these insights, questions were formulated to help assess the potential for integrating AFC into mainstream planning practice.

2.1.1 Scale

Each set of ideas, model or planning paradigm was conceived or designed to be applied at a specific scale. For example, Smart Growth was originally intended to be applied at the regional or city-wide scale, whereas Universal or Inclusive Design was created to be implemented at the scale of the individual building or even elements within a building. Inevitably, these distinctions can become blurred when applied by parties with different perspectives or agendas. This problem is exacerbated when new concepts are introduced to the field as additions to the debate.

Is it clear at which scale AFC is intended to be utilized? Are the principles of AFC sufficiently well defined to allow the concept to be adapted to local conditions and evolve over time?

2.1.2 Tools

Planners require a variety of tools to accomplish specific tasks such as the creation of policy, community design or evaluation of development proposals. There are important practical differences between developing policy based on a set of principles (such as Smart Growth), assessing projects against measurable benchmarks or indicators (such as Healthy Communities), or designing projects on the basis of specific criteria or development standards (such as New Urbanism or LEED ND).

Do the principles underlying AFC and the resulting checklist provide planners with the tools needed to accomplish specific tasks? Is there a good fit between the AFC concept and the range of tasks that comprise planning practice? Can the concepts of AFC be used by the private sector as well as public sector planners?

[2] These were Smart Growth, Healthy Communities, New Urbanism, Universal Design, Age Friendly Communities, Child Friendly Communities, LEED ND, WHO Safe Communities, Heat Resilient Communities, Active Living Communities.

2.1.3 Planning Continuum

Planning is a continuous and often iterative process that moves along a continuum that typically begins with the identification of a problem, data gathering and analysis, the creation of policy and public engagement, to the development of guidelines through to design and evaluation.

Where does AFC fall along this continuum, and does it have the flexibility to be applied in more than one phase of planning?

2.1.4 Prescriptions and Measurement

Some planning models are intended to influence design of the built environment (which can be prescribed at the outset), while others are better suited to measuring the results on the ground after the fact (such as the demographic make-up of a community) and are therefore more useful as evaluative tools.

The principles of AFC are a mix of prescriptive actions and principles related to things that cannot be prescribed. Does this restrict the likelihood that planners will adopt AFC?

2.1.5 Responsibility for Action

Each new model that comes forward has a particular point of view or perspective. Some concepts are aimed at planning professionals while others are more focused on ideas that also appeal to the general public. A concept is more likely to be adopted by the planning profession if it is clear whose responsibility it is to take action or address specific issues. The more constituencies able to utilize the concepts the better, as this is likely to accelerate the rate of acceptance. A recent example of this is the rapid adoption of LEED, which began as a rating system for green buildings but which has recently been expanded to encompass development at the neighbourhood scale.

Does the AFC checklist make it clear whose responsibility it is to take action on a specific issue? Is the AFC model sufficiently accessible to private sector planners?

2.1.6 Focus

Some models are explicitly focused on a prescription to help planning professionals shape or improve the built environment while others are dedicated to fostering high quality public engagement concerning the quality and/or availability of municipal services.

What is the focus of the AFC model and is that focus compatible with the needs of planners?

The next step was to analyze each new model, including AFC, and then evaluate AFC against the questions identified above. Finally, insights gained from this process were used to identify “next steps” for “taking AFC mainstream.”

3.0 The Drive for Continuous Improvement in Planning

Although a number of new planning models aimed at improving quality of life have been introduced in recent years with varying degrees of success, policy makers, planners, the private sector and community advocates continue to explore new concepts and ideas that share the common goal of creating more livable, economically and environmentally sustainable communities.

While the goal may be to constantly renew the notion of what constitutes "good planning," there are practical constraints and limited resources available to invest in integrating new concepts into mainstream practice. Because planning takes place over such a diverse landscape and is practiced by planners in a variety of sectors working at vastly different scales, continuous improvement is a messy and often uneven process. The task is made more difficult when good ideas overlap or result in conflicting priorities[3]. This presents the planning community with an on-going challenge: how to evaluate the quality of new concepts and how to determine which ideas are most likely to improve the standard of practice.

Although demographers have been forecasting the aging of the population for decades, recognition that changes in the demographic make-up of society will have a dramatic impact on housing, transportation and the many elements that help define quality of life is relatively recent. The growing interest in the concept of Age Friendly Communities is therefore welcome as well as timely, and suggests that accelerating the process of integrating the principles of AFC into mainstream planning practice will lead to better planning outcomes for everyone.

3.1 Improving the Built Environment at the Core of "Good Planning"

The planning profession has undergone many changes over the years, but the role of the built environment, how it is planned, and how people interact with it, has been a constant in the continuing debate about what constitutes "good planning."

3.1.1 The Era of Urbanization – mid 19th to mid 20th century

The modern era of urban planning began in the 1850s, in response to an intense period of urbanization driven by the industrial revolution. The massive transformation in the economies of the world saw a shift away from agricultural economies to a focus on manufacturing and other city-based forms of wealth creation. For more than 100 years, the population of cities in the developed world of Europe and North America grew much faster than the general population, creating both opportunities and challenges.

Early planning efforts concentrated on the need to improve public health and safety, driven by a desire to prevent water borne diseases like cholera and reduce the risk of fire in dense new neighbourhoods. This spurred the development of the first water purification plants and sanitary sewer systems – the internal toilet was only invented in 1879 - as well as the introduction of new building materials (like concrete and structural steel) and construction techniques that reduced the risk of fire but which also facilitated high rise construction. Another important innovation was the invention of alternating current electricity, which allowed the source of power

[3] For example, Ontario's Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) provides that agricultural land be protected from development but other policies in the PPS require municipalities to maintain a supply of land to meet demand for new housing.

generation to be located much further from the source. AC electricity also had other considerable benefits such as reducing the risk of fire and dramatically improving air quality.

In the rush to construct cities, little thought was given at first to the implications of concentrating every conceivable type of land use in as little space as possible. This led to one of the principal planning tools developed early in the 20th century - zoning – a direct response to the need to separate noxious uses from sensitive land uses like housing. This was applauded by social reformers as much as real estate developers, who quickly found ways to benefit from this new tool.

The stimulus for change can often be traced to a single influential source or to ideas that are cross-fertilized between continents as communities search for solutions to common problems.

An example of this is the Garden City movement founded in Britain by Ebenezer Howard at the turn of the 20th century. Howard attempted to create idyllic green urban environments with carefully delineated zones for living, work and recreation as an antidote to the harsh conditions experienced by "the lower classes" in Britain's heavily industrialized cities. In the U.S., the City Beautiful movement aspired to many of the same ideals. Its advocates believed that "beautification could promote a harmonious social order that would increase the quality of life."[4] Several decades on, in pre-war Europe, the designs of Le Corbusier inspired the development of stark high rise concrete apartment blocks, and strict separations between pedestrian and vehicular traffic, again attempting to cure a variety of social ills through the creation of "ideal" built environments. In the U.S., Frank Lloyd Wright's Broadacre City designs offered a similar, highly stylized vision of urban living. Also in the 1930s, at the dawn of the "motor age," Clarence Stein and his colleagues introduced the notion of the residential "superblock" in Radburn, New Jersey, defined by cul-du-sacs and separate routes for cars and pedestrians. The notion that a well planned built environment could overcome a variety of social ills persisted even after the Second World War, leading to the creation of new towns to accommodate "overspill" from fast growing cities.

By the 1950s, improvements in diet, living conditions, education levels and advances in medical care had resulted in significant increases in life expectancy as well as much larger urban populations throughout the developed world. Conditions were set for the next wave of urban expansion and what we know today as the Baby Boom. In Canada, the need to deal with rapid post-war growth led to the passing of the first comprehensive planning acts, the creation of subdivision control mechanisms in several provinces and massive investments in roads and piped infrastructure. The federal government also established the forerunner of CMHC as a way to deal with the desperate need for new housing.

3.1.2 The Suburbanization Era – mid 20th to late 20th century

The second era of massive change, most noticeable in North America, was suburbanization – a reaction to overcrowding, on the one hand, but also as a symbol of the sudden freedom to develop residential areas far removed from sources of employment granted by the automobile and a dramatic improvement in the ability of civil engineers to create infrastructure capable of sustaining what is often referred to today as suburban sprawl.

[4] Daniel M. Bluestone, "Detroit's City Beautiful and the Problem of Commerce," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 47, no. 3 (1988): 245-62.

The suburbanization era was also driven by significant demographic changes – the Baby Boom being the most influential. Suburbanization was also made financially feasible by the emergence of easy credit and two-income households, although the latter phenomenon did not become a major factor until the late 1960s. During this period, the principles that drove urban planning continued to be heavily influenced by the notion of separating land uses, but beginning in the early 1970s, the voices of urban critics like Jane Jacobs began to be heard above those of engineers and planners practicing what Jacobs and others viewed as a sanitized view of urbanism[5].

"The Death and Life of Great American Cities" published in 1961 was the catalyst for development of what were originally perceived to be radical planning policies related to the mixing of land uses (and much more) but which today are considered mainstream. Similarly, the release of Rachel Carson's "Silent Spring" a year later in 1962[6] gave rise to the environmental movement. Within planning circles, this sowed the seeds for ideas about sustainability by emphasizing the importance of including environmental concerns in achieving a balance among competing priorities.

3.1.3 The Re-Urbanization Era – late 20th century to the present

The third era to note is the re-urbanization era, which began in the 1980s with the emergence of Smart Growth and continues today. Re-urbanization is characterized by a desire by policy makers, planners and a variety of articulate interest groups to halt the outward spread of cities. The re-urbanization ethic is fueled by the recognition that resources such as land, water and energy are not infinite. Suburbanization continues, but there are now counteracting forces that function at different scales but which share common values in an attempt to reverse these trends. At the macro scale, provincial and regional governments are promoting regional planning initiatives that emphasize brownfields redevelopment, reduced dependence on cars, infrastructure renewal and ecosystem regeneration. At a smaller scale – primarily focused on neighbourhoods – planners are advocating solutions that encourage higher densities, mixed-use, and pedestrian-friendly design, or walkability.

In the view of many planners and policy makers, the coincidence and complementary benefits of "reurbanization" and "age friendly" represent a golden opportunity to repair damage done during the suburbanization era and recalibrate notions of "good planning" to everyone's mutual advantage, including seniors.

4.0 Recent Planning Models that Influence Planning Practice

The following section analyzes a range of current planning models that in some respect or other share the common goal of creating a better quality built environment.

4.1 Smart Growth

Smart Growth is a movement that dates from the 1980s. The concept was developed to combat sprawl, which is defined as new development that consumes land at a faster rate than the rate at which the population is growing. Sprawl can also be defined by its environmental and economic costs. The focus of Smart Growth is on

[5] Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York, NY: Modern Library, 1961).

[6] Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring* (Boston, MA: Houghton Miffin, 1962).

land use and development practices that enhance the quality of life in communities, preserve the natural environment, and save money over time[7].

The concept of Smart Growth is based on a set of principles that includes managing growth at the regional scale, controlling urban sprawl, protecting and conserving natural environments, and integrating land use and transportation while promoting high density, affordable housing and livable environments[8]. Smart Growth is aimed at improving access and quality of life in more livable and less car-dependent communities for everyone at all stages of life, including young people, immigrants, low-income people, and seniors[9]. Many documents now explicitly state that the goal of Smart Growth is to create Livable Communities (another common term found in the literature).

Strategies range from demand management, which includes acknowledging (and in some cases, charging) the true cost of transportation infrastructure and services, water and energy, to development practices that minimize environmental damage and foster vibrant communities[10].

As sprawling development patterns ate up valuable land at an alarming rate in the 1970s, transportation and community planners started to promote the idea of compact communities, supported by environmental groups like the Sierra Club[11]. The private sector led the anti-sprawl movement in the 1990s, when the term Smart Growth was born. Other groups that have acknowledged the effects of sprawl and joined the Smart Growth movement include local governments, environmental groups, and commuters, who helped lobby successfully for federal funding to pay for improved infrastructure in the U.S. In Canada, NGOs like the Canadian Urban Institute worked with a variety of stakeholders to successfully launch discussion and recognition of "the urban agenda"[12].

As the Urban Land Institute and others have noted, providing services for unmanaged growth is financially inefficient, while the land values of standard suburban development often suffer due to poor planning, increased traffic and deteriorating housing stock[13]. Many developers and builders are also beginning to understand it can be more economical and easier to integrate urban developments into natural systems, since research has shown that using ecosystem functions can reduce the need for expensive built infrastructure and

[7] "Saving money" means that less investment will be needed to provide infrastructure, and that the operating costs of Smart Growth development are lower than conventional development.

[8] B. S.Onyschuk and P. Nikolakokos, *Smart Growth in North America: New Ways to Create Livable Communities* (Toronto, ON: Canadian Urban Institute, 2001).

[9] P. Campsie, *Smart Growth in Canada* (Toronto, ON: Canadian Urban Institute, 2001).

[10] Deborah Curran May Leung, *Smart Growth: A Primer* (Vancouver, BC: Smart Growth British Columbia, 1999), http://www.smartgrowth.bc.ca/Default.aspx?tabid=159.

[11] P. Campsie, *Smart Growth in Canada.*

[12] B. S.Onyschuk and P. Nikolakokos, *Smart Growth in North America.*

[13] D. O'Neill, *Smart Growth: Myth and Fact* (Washington, D.C.: Urban Land Institute, 1999).

increase the value of nearby properties. Smart Growth advocates development that is more economically, socially and environmentally sound, as it aims to decrease subsidies for new developments[14]. An ecosystem approach to Smart Growth also helps preserve clean air and water[15].

The principles of Smart Growth have also been used to establish indicators, such as measuring the degree to which built form is compact and how dependent a particular area is on the private car. A variety of toolkits have also been developed to implement best practices. The principles are:

- **Create a range of affordable, quality housing choices**
- **Encourage vibrant, walkable complete communities**
- **Create Smart Building Design**
- **Renew existing communities**
- **Promote green Infrastructure**
- **Preserve green space, farmland and Ecologically Sensitive Areas**
- **Practice broad-scale, integrated planning at the regional scale**
- **Provide transportation options**
- **Facilitate community Involvement**
- **Focus on Implementation.**

Since the concept in North America was designed for use at the regional scale, this is reflected in Smart Growth legislation at the state and provincial level. However, Smart Growth has been adapted to smaller scales to deal with context-specific circumstances. For example, Ontario's Places to Grow Act recognizes the differences between regions and communities. While the legislation requires most new development to occur in established urban areas that have already been paved over, precise formulas (targets for the number of jobs and residents per hectare) vary according to the characteristics of individual communities.

Smart Growth is meant to influence and guide the development process. Even its name recognizes the need for growth but indicators developed to measure the success of the concept can also be used to retro-fit existing urban areas that are compatible with Smart Growth principles. Because the concept largely targets built form, Smart Growth tends to be prescriptive but indicators derived from the principles can be used to assess or evaluate current conditions in terms of livability.

In Canada, the principles of Smart Growth have been effectively integrated into everyday planning practice over the past 20 years. There are at least four reasons for this. The first is that Canadian planning already had a strong tradition of regional planning dating back to the post-war period. The second is that the concept of Smart Growth resonated with both political leaders and the interested public following a period of sustained rapid growth that created some very visible problems that needed resolution. Third, and perhaps most important, planners have been able

[14] Curran and Leung, *Smart Growth*.
[15] P. Campsie, *Smart Growth in Canada.*

to take the principles of Smart Growth and adapt them to their needs. Fourth, the principles of Smart Growth lend themselves to clear communication with the public and as a result the concepts inherent in Smart Growth have been embraced by many public interest groups across Canada.[16]

Finally, a report prepared for the CMHC in 2008, brought a variety of compatible concepts under one umbrella[17]. The short form title was "Community Indicators for an Aging Population," and curiously made no mention of AFC, even though the paper was prepared at a time when AFC was already well known in federal circles. The paper undertook extensive consultation and reviews with planners across Canada, and identified six key categories:

- **Neighbourhood walkability**
- **Transportation options**
- **Access to services**
- **Housing choice**
- **Safety**
- **Community engagement in civic activities.**

The report was extremely critical of the lack of progress in successfully implementing Smart Growth and related concepts and called on the government to take leadership. More importantly, however, the report noted that "many planning and zoning changes needed to facilitate housing strategies that meet smart growth and livable community goals are the same as those needed to support aging in place."

4.2 Healthy Communities

Just a year before the Brundtland Commission released its 1987 report on sustainability called *Our Common Future*, the World Health Organization met in Lisbon to establish the Healthy Cities Project, an idea first developed in Toronto in 1984. With support from the WHO, the Healthy Communities vision has spread to hundreds of local governments and communities across Canada and many more around the world[18].

The idea of Healthy Communities is based on key assumptions about the nature of health: that local government has a critical role to play in determining community quality of life and the health of residents; that capacity for individual health is closely associated with environmental quality; and that more equitable distribution of social and economic benefits results in improved health for the general population[19].

[16] Smart Growth Canada (www.smartgrowth.ca) is one such group.
[17] Industrial Economics, *Smart Growth, Livable and Sustainable Communities for Seniors* (Ottawa, ON: CMHC, 2008).
[18] Mary Louise McAllister, "Environmental Challenges: Redefining the Public Interest," in *Governing Ourselves: The Politics of Canadian Communities*, Mary Louise McAllister, 172-97 (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004).
[19] S. Wismer, "From the Ground Up: Quality of Life Indicators and Sustainable Community Development," *Feminist Economics* 5, no. 2 (1999): 109-114.

The principles associated with Healthy Communities are holistic and therefore more difficult to measure. They include ethics, identity and place. Identity in this case is based on people's capacity to make productive and valuable contributions to individual, family and community well-being, while place refers to access and control over the resources associated with a particular geographic area[20].

- **Qualities of a Healthy Community include:**
- **Clean and safe physical environment**
- **Peace, equity and social justice**
- **Adequate access to food, water, shelter, income, safety, work and recreation for all**
- **Adequate access to health care services**
- **Opportunities for learning and skill development**
- **Strong, mutually supportive relationships and networks**
- **Workplaces that are supportive of individual and family well-being**
- **Wide participation of residents in decision-making**
- **Strong local cultural and spiritual heritage**
- **Diverse and vital economy**
- **Protection of the natural environment**
- **Responsible use of resources to ensure long term sustainability**

The Ontario Professional Planners Institute has narrowed Healthy Communities principles into more specific elements that OPPI advocates should be addressed as part of common planning practice. All of the elements can be related to planning: these include transportation, infrastructure, urban design, and local food. Within these categories there are more specific objectives aimed at increasing transportation access and connectivity, replacing aging infrastructure with greener eco-friendly alternatives, using urban design to achieve more compact, mixed-use communities that promote and support an active lifestyle, and the promotion of local food in support of a healthier environment and improved food security[21].

The areas related to the built environment are:

- **Density**
- **Mix of Uses**
- **Mobility Options**
- **Connectivity**
- **Concentrated Uses**
- **Street design and management**
- **Building design**
- **Green infrastructure.**

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ontario Professional Planners Institute, *Healthy Communities Sustainable Communities: The 21st century challenge* (Toronto, ON: OPPI, 2009), http://www.ccac-ont.ca/Upload/esc/General/Community%20Summit/OPPI_HealthyCommunitiesRevisedSeptember2009.pdf

To guide implementation of the elements suggested by HC principles, OPPI partnered with the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing on a handbook called *Planning by Design*. The handbook provides a basic process and supporting municipal checklist for exploring ideas and opportunities for health-friendly communities. This approach is more holistic than prescriptive, since the checklist covers a diverse range of objectives, some tangible and measurable, some not. The handbook also provides sustainable development and planning tools designed to influence, guide and support more sustainable decision-making.

The Heart and Stroke Foundation supports a similar concept called "Shaping Active, Healthy Communities." This movement also calls for action at the municipal level based on a built environment toolkit. The goal is to make communities more supportive of physical activity using strategies that include good public transit, well-maintained parks and safe, efficient walking and cycling networks[22]. The toolkit is designed to inform aims individuals and organizations about current conditions and help them find opportunities for community input. This concept is less prescriptive than OPPI's Healthy Communities approach and aims more to influence planning outcomes by encouraging more stakeholders to get involved. The scale of policy and implementation is city or community-wide but participation by smaller neighbourhood groups and other individuals and organizations is strongly encouraged. In this respect, the Heart and Stroke's initiative has more in common with the Age Friendly Community concept than OPPI's approach.

When local governments pursue Healthy Communities objectives, the level of consultation required to be truly holistic and collaborative can be time consuming and inefficient if not organized properly. Municipal councils should have a clear vision first, coupled with a strong belief in the value of civic engagement and a willingness to provide adequate support and funding for HC initiatives over the long term[23].

Translating holistic integrated principles into operating practices is challenging. There is the practical concern of holding the appropriate individuals to account, along with the possibility that too many people with competing agendas can be involved in decision-making with an unclear mandate and undefined boundaries[24]. In order for HC principles to be adopted successfully with a positive outcome, the public must be encouraged to engage with open and responsive planners and policy makers, who retain final decision-making authority[25].

The Healthy Communities movement, which is intended for use at the community scale, can also be applied to specific neighbourhoods. In some cases, principles are seen as general goals for local governments to keep in mind when making policy. In other cases, principles have acted as a blueprint to guide community development, which often includes extensive public consultation, making it less prescriptive at the outset. While municipal councils frequently make decisions related to Healthy Communities, there is a need for education and mobilization on the part of other stakeholders in order to motivate local councils to act[26].

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[22] Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada, *Shaping Active, Healthy Communities Tooklit* (Ottawa, ON: HSFC, 2010), http://www.heartandstroke.com/atf/cf/%7B99452D8B-E7F1-4BD6-A57D-B136CE6C95BF%7D/BETK_HSF_Built_Environments_ENG.pdf.

[23] McAllister, "Environmental Challenges".
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada, *Shaping Active, Healthy Communities.*

4.3 New Urbanism

New Urbanism, a planning movement that first emerged in the 1980s and formed its own charter in the 1990s, is similar in approach to Smart Growth. Both promote walkable, mixed-use neighborhood development, healthier living conditions and sustainable communities. Both movements are "anti-sprawl" and support the preservation of natural environments but New Urbanism tends to focus more on creating new suburban development that is more sustainable than conventional post-war suburbs designed around the private automobile. New Urbanism also has much in common with traditional neighbourhood design (TND) or pre-war suburbs and transit-oriented development (TOD).

The principles of New Urbanism are quite prescriptive, and deal primarily with built form and infrastructure. These principles, which are often translated into broad planning goals in municipal plans, include livable streets arranged in compact, walkable blocks, a range of housing choices to serve people of diverse ages and income levels, a vibrant, human-scaled public realm, combined with schools, shopping and other destinations within walking distance or easily accessible by cycling or transit[27]. Since these principles can be interpreted differently by various stakeholders from a variety of perspectives, the U.S.-based Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU), an organization devoted to promoting the principles of New Urbanism, has developed a strategic plan to enable and promote the reform of regulatory structures governing the building industry and related professionals[28].

The principles are:

- **Sustainability**
- **Mixed-use & diversity**
- **Mixed housing**
- **Connectivity & smart transportation**
- **Quality architecture & urban design**
- **Walkability**
- **Increased density**
- **Quality of Life.**

The principles of New Urbanism are also used to reinforce the character of existing walkable areas or help retrofit car-dependent neighbourhoods. Although the scale of the New Urbanism approach typically targets a particular community or neighbourhood, New Urbanism principles have also been applied regionally. Advocates try to influence and guide public policy, as has been done in Markham, Ontario. The CNU targets developers and other stakeholders with education to help them understand their roles in support of more integrated implementation. However, this is an initiative based in the United States. Similar resources tailored to local environments could prove very useful in Canada.

The Town of Markham has promoted New Urbanism in its plans and regulations since the 1990s, notably in the village of Cornell and in Markham Centre, an area planned to be the town's dense new downtown. In Cornell, form-based codes (an American term for zoning) have been used to support a mix of uses and a variety of

[27] Congress for the New Urbanism, "About Congress for the New Urbanism," http://www.cnu.org.
28 Congress for the New Urbanism, *CNU Strategic Plan 2007-2012*, CNU, http://www.cnu.org/sites/www.cnu.org/files/Strategic_Plan_0.pdf.

housing types and sizes. The village is built on a walkable, grid-like street pattern with schools, stores and community centres close to housing. Plans for Markham Centre are aimed at intensifying the existing urban area with mixed-used development within the established urban boundary, while adding large amounts of open space and many new jobs.

A new, Canadian-based organization – the Canadian Council for Urbanism – was recently incorporated to promote a Canadian perspective on these principles and articulate a multi-disciplinary, urban design-led approach that is culture-specific to Canada.

4.4 Universal Design

Universal Design (also referred to as Inclusive Design) is a concept that targets physical environments at the individual unit scale. The goal is to ensure that all aspects of the built environment can be used by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design[29]. Because Universal Design is intended to accommodate people of all abilities, this explicitly avoids the requirement to plan for the needs of any one particular group. The principles behind Universal Design include:

- **Equitable use**
- **Flexibility of use**
- **Simple and intuitive design requiring a minimal amount of effort**
- **Perceptible information (clear communication regarding use)**
- **Safety & tolerance for error**
- **Low physical effort**
- **Appropriate size and scale**
- **Quality of life**

A Universal Design guide describes desirable features for accessible housing at the dwelling scale but because the abilities of individuals are diverse, the guide is not prescriptive, but rather lists some structural and non-structural features to look for. Policy is at a larger scale, as with the Americans with Disabilities Act in the United States or in Ontario, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), but implementation is usually one building or development at a time.

In other jurisdictions such as the United Kingdom, Universal Design has been adapted into the lexicon for a wide variety of disciplines, from urban planners to transportation engineers to health care specialists. In Japan, the principles of Universal Design were officially adopted by the national government more than 15 years ago, and the principles (or philosophy) of Universal Design are applied throughout government and have been adopted by major corporations like Panasonic and Toyota.

[29] Center for Universal Design, "Universal Design Principles", North Carolina State University College of Design, http://www.design.ncsu.edu/cud/about_ud/about_ud.htm.

Beginning in 2005, the CUI began to apply the principles of Universal (or inclusive) Design at the neighbourhood scale – blending the principles of New Urbanism with Universal Design to create "Integrated Design"[30]. These principles can be used in a prescriptive way to influence the design of new neighbourhoods as well as a basis for evaluating the conditions of a place once it has been built.

- **Equitable and sustainable use**
- **Flexibility and mixed-use**
- **Neighbourhood structure**
- **Transit-oriented**
- **Walkable**
- **Simple and intuitive**
- **Perceptible information**
- **Quality design, safety and tolerance for error**
- **Low physical effort.**

These principles were developed as the basis for presentations to planners and other stakeholders in advance of the Age Friendly Communities initiative and have to date not only been addressed by students but also formed the basis of testimony before the Special Senate Committee on Aging.[31]

4.5 Child Friendly Cities

The idea to adopt "child friendly planning" first gained momentum in 1989 with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. By 1996, participants at The United Nations Habitat II Conference agreed the "well-being of children is the ultimate indicator of a healthy habitat, a democratic society and good governance"[32]. UNICEF has established a Child Friendly Cities secretariat, and several countries now sponsor research and guidelines to support Child Friendly Cities (CFC).

Major issues critical to the creation and maintenance of a child-friendly community include safety, green space access and integration. Some of the most concrete CFC goals include child-friendly housing design, schools and access to safe water and transportation. The CFC framework covers a broad range of objectives though, some of which are more difficult to define and measure, such as involving children in consultations with schools regarding curriculum issues and behaviour policies[33].

International research has led to the establishment of a broad framework of CFC principles, to be used with a set of assessment criteria. CFC advocates evaluate for degree of success first and then reference principles, using checklists, to develop strategies to improve conditions or the child-friendly quotient. These checklists are

30 G. Miller, G. Harris and I. Ferguson, "Mobility Under Attack – Are Older Canadian Ready to Live Without Their Cars?" *Ontario Planning Journal* 21, no. 4 (2006).

[31] Special Senate Committee on Aging, Final Report, "Canada's Aging Population: Seizing the Opportunity," April 2009.

32 W. Van Vliet,Creating Livable Cities for All Ages: Intergenerational Strategies and Initiatives (Nanjing, China: UN Habitat, 2008).

[33] UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, *Building Child Friendly Cities: A Framework For Action* (Florence, Italy: UNICEF: 2004).

supposed to evaluate how cities meet children's needs and inform CFC policies and programs. Because CFC criteria address elements as diverse as physical environments, municipal institutions, methods to involve children in local decision-making and social mobilization, measurement tools vary widely, as do the strategies to address deficiencies. The complexity of navigating the checklists may help to explain why they are not yet being widely used in evaluation research[34].

There is some obvious overlap in some of the objectives of child and age friendly cities. The intergenerational integration of urban livability initiatives therefore has the potential to result in more efficient use of physical facilities and funding sources[35]. For example, schools and seniors centres could be used to provide services to both groups at different times, taking advantage of shared infrastructure and resources while fostering interaction between the generations.

There are, however, some integration challenges. The mandates of organizations representing children may well have different priorities than those advocating for seniors. Sometimes these differences are a function of poor communication but can also result from conflicts related to competition for funding from the same sources. Cooperation between these groups is therefore necessary to develop broader and more cost-effective strategies for combining common goals[36]. Both children and seniors are also frequently restricted by income and mobility, which can complicate the logistics of social interaction and participation[37].

Specific areas addressed through Child-Friendly principles are:

- **Physical environments**
- **Information, communication and social mobilization**
- **Plans of action (to gain participation of children)**
- **Training packages/methodologies for different target groups**
- **Laws, rules, regulations and planning norms**
- **Municipal-level institutions focused on children's rights**
- **Monitoring systems to assess the quality of the environment**
- **Planning and impact indicators.**

While the scale of policy objectives is citywide, current conditions must often be evaluated on a neighbourhood scale. Improvements may sometimes be implemented using citywide policies but monitoring for success must once again be at a neighbourhood scale. This assessment-based approach is too vague to be considered prescriptive, yet the goals for outcomes can be quite specific. There is therefore potential for this concept to be developed as a prescriptive tool, once a detailed assessment has been made by the local community.

[34] Van Vliet,*Creating Livable Cities.*

35 Ibid.

36 N. Henkin and D. Butts, "Advancing an Intergenerational Agenda in the United States," in Linking Lifetimes: *A Global View of Intergenerational Exchange*, ed. M. Kaplan, N. Henkin and A. Kusano, 65-82 (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2002).

[37] Van Vliet,*Creating Livable Cities.*

4.6 LEED ND

LEED ND, which stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design for Neighbourhood Development, is a comprehensive system to assess, guide and certify community developments. This is an extension of the Green Building Council's established green rating system at the building scale. LEED ND is still in the pilot stages in both Canada and the U.S. The Council, which, for the past five years has had an active Canadian arm (Canada Green Building Council – CaGBC), is developing standards to prescribe design standards for the development of new neighbourhoods. The same criteria could also be used to measure the sustainability of existing neighbourhoods.

The LEED ND rating system awards points for sustainability features designed to address climate change, rising energy costs and the increasing ecological footprint of our communities. Points are also awarded for what LEED ND recognizes as the key features of good urban design including: compact walkable environments that are supportive of pedestrians, cyclists and transit, energy and water efficiency, visible access to green space networks, diverse mixed-use development, durability, connectivity, local identity, and a vibrant public realm. LEED ND also takes into account features that seek to improve public health and quality of life. LEED ND provides support tools, including a reference guide. The CaGBC will also assist with the hiring and managing of consultants and contractors, to help promote efficiency and consistency, and to clarify who is responsible for what.

- **Walkable streets**
- **Compact development**
- **Mixed-use neighbourhood centres**
- **Reduced parking footprint**
- **Street network**
- **Transit facilities**
- **Transportation demand management**
- **Access to civic and public spaces**
- **Visitability and Universal Design**
- **Community outreach and involvement**
- **Local food production**
- **Tree lined and shaded streets.**

The mixing of prescriptive requirements (i.e. reduced parking footprint) with operational issues such as transportation demand management (TDM) reflects the fact that the LEED ND concept has been established as a tool for developers, who presumably would undertake or possibly delegate to others a specific element such as TDM.

The concept of LEED ND is based on the principles of good community and building design. While the concept is primarily used as an implementation tool to achieve a specific rating that can be used by the developer for marketing purposes, LEED ND also guides and influences the planning process, because local governments are

using LEED ND to establish standards for policy. Some municipalities are choosing to accept LEED ND as a peer-reviewed rating system, while others are electing to replicate the standards with their own version[38].

For the private sector, this translates into third-party legitimacy for their efforts to build greener, more inclusive communities. Certification can also help projects win approval more quickly and/or result in the waiving of certain municipal fees in some jurisdictions[39]. Implementation also results in lower energy and water costs. LEED ND is primarily a rating and implementation tool designed for use at the neighbourhood scale but has the potential to guide green building and neighbourhood design practices. Once LEED ND moves beyond the pilot stage, it is likely that the tools will be adapted for the purposes of retrofitting older communities, although this would require a rethinking of which party takes responsibility for implementation.

4.7 WHO Safe Communities

This planning model, introduced by the World Health Organization in 1989, focuses on enhancing safety through collaborative community planning. The goal is to reduce the potential for injury in all environments for all groups but particularly for those considered at high risk, including children, teenagers and older people. WHO Safe Communities (WHO SC) supports the process of establishing a cross-sectoral group to address safety concerns, creating a program evaluation to include clear indicators, and encouraging the participation of health and sports organizations along with other community stakeholders. Interventions target institutions (mainly schools), the workplace, and transportation infrastructure. There is also a strong focus on education, data collection and monitoring with less emphasis on the broader built environment than models like New Urbanism and Smart Growth.

The basic principle underlying WHO SC unities is that all human beings have an equal right to health and safety. The focus is on prevention of injuries and suicide via safety and health promotion combined with public education. The approach is to assess current safety conditions first and influence the process for improvement afterwards. The concept is applied primarily at the community scale and implemented by cross-sectoral teams working together to develop safety guidelines and practices. Some of the indicators include road traffic, child drowning and pesticide poisoning rates. Besides planners, WHO Safe Communities aims to influence and engage government agencies, law enforcement, healthcare providers, business and service organizations, citizens' groups, schools, social services agencies and service organizations with an integrated approach that rejects top-down decision-making.

The Safe Communities concept is rather too broad to be easily integrated into traditional planning processes, but elements have been developed by organizations like Transport Canada, which has borrowed another new term, "complete streets," to promote safer road conditions. The following criteria appear on the Transport Canada website.

38 Canada Green Building Council, "LEED Canada for Neighbourhood Design," CGBC, http://www.cagbc.org (accessed December 4, 2010).
39 Ibid.

Improved pedestrian infrastructure, e.g. well-designed and well-placed crosswalks, pedestrian crossing "islands," raised crosswalks, audible pedestrian signals and sidewalk "bulb outs" (widened sidewalks that effectively narrow the road).

- **Sidewalk amenities for pedestrians and those waiting for public transit, such as benches, recycling bins, public art**
- **Improved bicycle infrastructure and amenities, such as bicycle lanes, racks and parking areas**
- **Wider shoulders**
- **Synchronized traffic signals along major routes and arterial roads**
- **Bus pullouts or special bus lanes**
- **Safe and convenient pedestrian connections to transit stops**
- **Landscaping features such as trees, planters and ground cover**
- **Centre medians**
- **Fewer driveways**
- **On-street parking and other speed reduction methods, such as traffic calming measures.**

4.8 Heat Resilient Communities

The Heat Resilient Communities model is designed to respond to the growing public health risk associated with climate change. Proponents, including public health officials at various levels of government, are attempting to increase awareness of the health risks associated with heat waves, offer information about protection and improve research into how protection is best achieved. In Canada the federal government has a program to help strengthen the capacity of communities, health care workers and individuals to manage heat-related health risk. The five-pronged HRC strategy consists of (i) public education about heat effects and protection, (ii) research focused on when to call a heat alert and how effective various protective actions are, (iii) information for health care workers, (iv) pilot heat alert and response systems and (v) partnerships to build and share knowledge[40]. The planning focus is on the development of heat alert and response systems, the provision of health professional intervention and training, and the development of clinical guidelines for vulnerable populations including older people, children, people with chronic diseases, certain labour groups and the economically disadvantaged. Health Canada seeks to help communities develop response systems with minimum standards, protocols and best practices. So far, this community planning model is almost exclusively based on research and education targeting health professionals, planners and the general public.

This model is not based on principles but rather offers information to reduce heat related health risks at the community scale. Indicators being developed include a web based spatial decision support system to examine heat islands and assist planners and public health staff in decision-making. This type of tool can help identify

[40] Health Canada, "Developing Heat Resilient Communities and Individuals in Canada," Government of Canada, http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/climat/adapt/heat-chaleur-eng.php.

vulnerable populations in hotspots, and guide the allocation of resources including public health nurses and the location of cooling centres[41].

HRC is meant to both assess current conditions and guide the process for improving community conditions and the response process during heat waves. The concept is prescriptive in nature, but because it is relatively new and research on best practices is still underway, it is an emerging and still evolving planning model.

4.9 Active Living Communities

Active Living Communities (ALC) have much overlap with New Urbanism, Smart Growth, Age Friendly Communities and Healthy Communities; in particular the Heart and Stroke version, Shaping Active, Healthy Communities. This model largely targets the built environment utilizing New Urbanism principles, along with traffic calming measures and fiscal and regulatory strategies to support built environment improvements. The goal is to achieve healthier outcomes such as higher rates of walking and more desirable body mass index. Built environment indicators include attractive sidewalk networks, safe and accessible schoolyards, playgrounds and trails, and the conversion of brownfields into mixed-use, bike-friendly communities[42]. This concept is designed to be approached collaboratively by planners, public officials and active living advocates. The Active Living Research (ALR) program established by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) supports research to identify factors and policies that influence physical activity. New Urbanism principles are not only supportive of ALC goals but also used to measure its success. ALC is applied at the community scale and is used to guide the built environment and other indicators to support active living but is not actually prescriptive. Rather this concept seeks to involve a range of community stakeholders in the planning process to develop context-specific solutions.

In Canada, Active Living is promoted by Health Canada. Activities and community programs that feature this American program are sponsored by the Coca-Cola Corporation. Although the ideas are familiar to anyone involved in planning, this is essentially a marketing program.

4.10 Age Friendly Communities

There are many practical reasons to plan with our aging population in mind, not the least of which is that by accommodating the needs of older people, it is possible to better accommodate the needs of all groups, including those with disabilities and the very young. As the late Bernard Isaacs famously stated[43],

"Design for the young, and you exclude the old; design for the old and you include everyone."

[41] Clean Air Partnership, "Extreme Heat Decision Support System," CAP, http://www.cleanairpartnership.org/extreme_heat.
42Robert Cervero, "Transit-oriented Development's Ridership Bonus: a Product of Self-selection and Public Policies," *Environment and Planning* 39, no. 9 (2007): 2068-85.
[43] G. Miller, G. Harris and I. Ferguson, "Mobility Under Attack".

The Age Friendly Cities (AFC) project was launched by the WHO in 2006. Canada participated in a series of pilots, beginning in 2007. Canada also contributed to the original WHO initiative with an "Age Friendly Rural and Remote Communities Guide. In Canada, the "C" of cities was changed to "communities" to be inclusive of rural and remote communities. The AFC concept has spread across the country, largely as a result of provincial/territorial support for seniors secretariats, public health providers and social service agencies.

The practical goal of making a city age-friendly is to adapt its structures and services to be accessible to and inclusive of older people with varying needs and capacities. Consultation with older people, caregivers and service providers in the public, volunteer and private sectors has led to the development of a set of age-friendly checklists. The principles underpinning Age Friendly Communities are about optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security to enhance quality of life as people age[44].

The eight domains or topic areas of Age Friendly Communities are:

1. **Transportation**
2. **Housing**
3. **Social participation**
4. **Respect and social inclusion**
5. **Civic participation and employment**
6. **Communication and information**
7. **Community support and health services**
8. **Outdoor spaces and buildings.**

These are considered the key elements needed for communities to successfully support healthy aging and each is supported by the World Health Organization's "Global Age-Friendly Cities Guide."[45] The official checklist relates to these domains.

Many cities are making changes to try to accommodate and even attract older residents. The City of New York, for example, has given pedestrians a few more seconds to cross at over 400 intersections in an attempt to improve safety for older people. In June this year, the City of New York became the first official member of the World Health Organization's Age Friendly Cities Network. The City of London, Ontario is the first Canadian city to join.

The City of New York is also creating two "age-improvement districts," designed to be safer and more accessible for older residents. Students at New York University's Wagner Graduate School of Public Service are also developing a walking survey to rate age-friendliness, measuring conditions ranging from the frequency of

[44] World Health Organization. *Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide* (Geneva: WHO Press, 2007).
[45] Ibid.

cracked sidewalks to hospital access[46]. Similar protocols have been developed in the U.K., such as Inclusive Design for Getting Outdoors (IDGO).

Checklists are used to assess for the age friendliness quotient of a particular community or neighbourhood and articulate some concrete goals relating to built form. Many other elements though are more difficult to measure and set specific goals for, like social inclusion and civic participation. AFC checklists in various areas of urban living can be used as self-assessment, as well as rating tools to be employed by municipal agencies. Assessment and goal setting should involve government and other stakeholders, including older people, with the appropriate authorities making decisions based on community input. Ideally, community stakeholders should also be involved in implementation and monitoring; AFC checklists can also be used to chart progress. The difficulty with this multi-stakeholder approach is that apart from the decision-making, it is not always clear who should "take ownership" of needed changes in order to support desired outcomes.

The Age Friendly Communities movement targets the community scale and can be applied to individual neighbourhoods, but decision-making happens largely at the municipal level and should be a joint project undertaken by municipal social services including public health and urban planning departments.

4.11 Everything old is new again

As this scan illustrates, there is no shortage of new ideas, or a reluctance to repackage old ones, all aimed at influencing current planning practice. Urban planning today encompasses more than land use planning. The origins of the modern planning movement can be traced to the late 19th century, when practitioners from a variety of disciplines were focused on overcoming public health issues. Over time, with increasing specialization and an expanded array of urban problems to be resolved, the fields diverged. Now that the paths of planning and public health are once again intersecting, there are numerous opportunities to integrate and cross-fertilize the debate.

The adaptation and mixing of issues related to scale has been inevitable as planners, policy makers and the development industry often have to work at a smaller scale than the scale for which a particular planning concept may have been designed.

For example, Smart Growth was introduced as state legislation in the 1970s in Oregon to promote compact cities and communities. Since the 1990s though, when Smart Growth really caught on as an anti-sprawl movement, it has also been implemented at the community and neighbourhood level and some proponents now use the term "urban villages" to describe an approach that can be applied to city neighbourhoods, town centres, bedroom communities and rural villages[47]. It is also tempting for decision makers and others engaged with development at the local level to examine individual projects with a view to determining if a particular development is a "Smart Growth project."

While many of these planning movements share similar goals, some are based on a set of principles, while others use more specific criteria to assess for degrees of success using indicators, benchmarks, checklists and

[46] A. Hartocollis, "A Faced-Paced City Tries to Be a Gentler Place to Grow Old," *The New York Times,* July 18, 2010, Retrieved from http://nytimes.com.

[47] Ontario Smart Growth Network, "What is Smart Growth?" OSGN, http://www.smartgrowth.on.ca/whatis.htm.

even rating systems. Some concepts employ a combination of principles and specific criteria. There is still no common framework to help determine how each model relates to traditional practice or how each can be integrated into the planning and development or re-development process with clear implementation standards. Coherent explanations are needed detailing whose responsibility it is to address specific elements, so none of the relevant stakeholders are confused about what they should be doing or why.

Canadian planning policy has been generally supportive of Smart Growth and New Urbanism principles[48]. Many municipalities have adopted plans that encourage intensification, mixed-use, transit-oriented development, integrated housing, and connected street grids. However practice, particularly in the suburban context, has shown that these ideals sometimes have limited impact[49]. There is also growing acknowledgement among planners that the "demographic tsunami" heading Canada's way demands that good planning practice move with the times and begin to integrate concepts that provide for the needs of an aging population[50].

5.0 Drivers of Change – What Do Planners Look For?

Before determining the potential for AFC to be incorporated into planning practice, it is helpful to set out a basic model to represent a typical planning process. For the purposes of this report, planning is depicted as a continuous linear process:

- **Evaluation of conditions and problem identification**
- **Data gathering and analysis**
- **Development of policies and plans (and public engagement)**
- **Design of detailed plans based on zoning, design guidelines, public works standards**
- **Evaluation of development proposals**
- **Evaluation of conditions and problem identification (process starts again)**

This simplified model is based on a rough approximation of a typical municipal planning process. For a new model or concept to be readily integrated into the planning mainstream, the model needs to meet a number of general criteria. First, ideas or values expressed in the model need to be at least a step ahead of current thinking to merit their inclusion or integration. Second, the model should be adaptable to one or more tasks or actions that are part of the planning process. Third, the concepts inherent in the model should be useful to private sector planners as well as public sector planners. If the ideas can be readily communicated to the general public, this will also be beneficial.

[48] J. Grant. "Theory and Practice in Planning the Suburbs: Challenges to Implementing New Urbanism, Smart Growth, and Sustainability Principles." *Planning Theory & Practice* 10, no. 1 (2009): 11-33.
[49] Ibid.
[50] G. Miller, G. Harris and I. Ferguson, "Mobility Under Attack".

5.1 Is AFC compatible or complementary to mainstream planning?

More specifically, the following 10 questions need to be asked and answered with respect to the AFC model before developing a strategy to move AFC into the planning mainstream:

1. Is it clear at which scale AFC is intended to be utilized?

One of the enduring challenges in planning practice is the need for practitioners – and the stakeholders with whom planners interact – to manage issues of scale. Formal planning processes involving public consultation are typically organized around a specific scale. For example, a municipality setting out to overhaul its official city plan (the term varies across the country) will invite stakeholder groups and members of the general public to participate in visioning exercises – intended to set or recalibrate the general direction of planning policies in that community. This is where the principles of Smart Growth become useful to both the public and practitioners because they lend themselves to clear communication and debate. At the other end of the scale, ratepayer groups will often be invited to comment on zoning changes that affect an individual property. But some of the liveliest conversations between planners and the public take place at the neighbourhood scale, when a municipality undertakes a secondary planning exercise – more detailed than a city-wide plan but more generalized than the discussions around individual properties.

One of the challenges for planners and the politicians who approve (or not) policies that affect the built environment is to relate possible or probable impacts to the right scale. A planned transit line can be perceived to have a dramatic negative impact on a neighbourhood (construction impacts, facilitating increased densities etc.) but for those responsible for the wellbeing of the city as a whole, who are clearly dealing with the macro or city-wide scale, building a new transit facility can have many beneficial effects.

	Regional	City-wide	N'hood	Block	Street	Unit
Smart Growth	XXX	XXX	Recently			
Healthy Communities		XXX				
New Urbanism			XXX	XXX	XXX	
Universal Design						XXX
Child Friendly Cities		XXX				
LEED ND			XXX			
Age Friendly Communities		XXX	???			

Although the concepts of AFC are all desirable, application of an AFC checklist at a city-wide scale would similarly have different outcomes than one applied at a neighbourhood or even street scale. Thus, a review of the principles of AFC against a municipality's official city plan might identify a number of policies that result in a "positive" rating but applying the checklist to individual neighbourhoods could yield very different results. If

there are four or five neighbourhoods that score well but as many that score poorly, the rating for the community as a whole would not be accurate or useful. The matrix on the next page summarizes in a very general way where different concepts are currently being applied.

(Note: the concepts Heat Resilient Communities, WHO Safe Cities and Active Living Communities have not been included in this and following matrices.)

2. Are the principles of AFC sufficiently well defined to facilitate implementation and allow the concept to be adapted to local conditions and evolve over time?

Problems can occur with the implementation of any planning paradigm that does not provide both clear guidance at the local level or specific tools for assessment and implementation, along with explicitly defined responsibilities for all the relevant stakeholders. Some practitioners are calling for building details and configurations that match the quality and creativity of the master plans[51]. More clarity for all the actors involved in assessment and implementation can help bridge the gap between theory and practice, helping developers in particular better understand how to execute the vision of planning theorists. In this respect it is not clear that AFC is sufficiently rigorous as currently configured to meet this test.

3. Do the principles underlying AFC and the resulting checklist provide planners with the tools needed to accomplish specific tasks?

At present, the AFC principles and checklist would need to be reorganized and possibly segmented according to which step in the process is being undertaken.

Each feature has an extensive list of descriptive criteria that can be used as indicators or even benchmarks. The checklist is designed to be used by a variety of players but is also intended to be used as a tool to measure progress. Only the first three components directly connect to built form issues – and in that sense could be used as prescriptive indicators – although civic participation is a key element of all planning, employment can be connected to built form, and "community and health services" also has a land use component. The remaining features are characteristics of urban living that may or may not be connected to the way a community is designed or managed.

4. Is there a good fit between the AFC concept and the range of tasks that comprise planning practice?

Compared to models such as Smart Growth, New Urbanism and LEED ND, the AFC model is less comprehensive than other models on the one hand, but covers a broader range of issues on the other. At this time, as currently configured, AFC is not a perfect fit.

[51] R. Steuteville, "The Devil in the Details," New Urban News, http://www.newurbannews.com/Oct-NovStories.html.

5. Given that many planners are focused on the quality of the built environment, does the AFC checklist cover an appropriate range of issues?

The AFC principles and checklist are obviously addressing important, highly relevant issues, but currently are insufficiently specific to provide guidance at the design phase of planning, but as indicated above, are likely to be more useful in an evaluative role.

6. Can the concepts of AFC be used by the private sector as well as public sector planners?

The LEED model has grown to become an integral part of the planning process in a very short period of time. In less than 10 years, the Canada Green Building Council has grown its membership to more than 10,000 professionals. LEED accreditation has also become a priority for most major development companies. There is potential for AFC to be developed as a brand in a similar way for developers addressing the seniors market. Creating a situation where "An AFC accredited" project or AFC accredited social service agency becomes desirable as a marketing tool is not an unreasonable aspiration, and could be positioned in the same way as Energy Star and other standards of excellence.

7. Where does AFC fall along the planning continuum, and does it have the flexibility to be applied in more than one phase of planning?

The planning model set out below is a highly stylized version of the real world but provides a rough framework to evaluate AFC's potential as a model for planners.

Evaluation of conditions and problem identification

The checklist provides a general starting point for evaluating conditions at the community scale. As indicated earlier, it would be most useful on a neighbourhood scale, but could also be applied in settings where municipalities are undertaking strategic corporate reviews and similar initiatives, or as the basis for engagement with the public at high level visioning sessions.

Data gathering and analysis

The checklist would need to be refined for specific tasks, but the values implicit in the principles and checklist would provide a good start.

Development of policies and plans (and public engagement)

One of the major challenges facing provincial governments in Canada (which are ultimately responsible for municipal activities), is to counter-act the tendency for silo-driven policies and priorities. The extensive range of topics addressed in the principles provide an excellent tool for provincial governments to evaluate how programs in individual departments add up in terms of providing good "customer service" to a specific demographic such as seniors. The same would apply to municipal visioning exercises prior to the commencement of an official city plan review process. For two tier government jurisdictions, which have responsibilities that range from public health and social service delivery to local concerns such as approving development applications, the AFC principles and checklist could be quite useful.

Design of detailed city and secondary plans, as well as zoning, design guidelines, public works standards

The AFC principles and checklist would need to be revamped and reorganized in order to be useful for the tasks undertaken at this stage of the planning process.

Evaluation of development proposals

One of the critical steps in city building is the role of planners in approving development projects. For the most part, planners rely on provincial policies (when they are available, as in Ontario) and the policies in their own official city plans (or in secondary, more detailed plans where they are available). Unfortunately, not enough effort is put into this phase of the planning process, largely because planning departments are typically under pressure to "keep the process moving" and the need or feasibility of evaluating a project or plan for a sizable new neighbourhood represents a challenge for most departments. Nevertheless, this is in fact the part of the process where AFC could be most influential, as new projects are circulated to every municipal department and externally to other interested agencies (such as school boards, community services, public health, the conservation authority etc). Requiring or facilitating the role of the planning department in coordinating comments on new projects relative to the principles inherent in AFC is potentially the most useful way to "take AFC mainstream."

	Principles	Criteria	Indicators	Perform. Stand.	Checklist	Toolkit
Smart Growth	Yes		Yes			Yes
Healthy Communities			Yes		Yes	
New Urbanism	Yes			Yes		
Universal Design	Yes	Yes		Yes		
Age Friendly Communities	Yes				Yes	
Child Friendly Cities	Yes		Yes			
LEED ND	Yes			Yes		

If it is accepted that the principles of Smart Growth, New Urbanism and LEED ND are having the desired influence at the prescriptive end of the planning process, then the role played by AFC can be considerably enhanced.

8. The principles of AFC are a mix of prescriptive actions and principles related to things that cannot be prescribed. Does this restrict the likelihood that planners will adopt AFC?

The genesis for various models analyzed in this report differs. Many new concepts emerge as a proposed solution to a problem. A tangible example of this is Universal Design, the criteria for which were first developed to address problems related to physical disabilities. Some concepts lend themselves to the development of policy while others are more suited to creating a broader level of awareness among decision makers. A key difference, however, is whether a concept is intended to be used *proactively* – prior to design of a plan or project, or *reactively* – an action or set of actions that typically takes place when a community or neighbourhood

already exists, and the goal is to assess its qualities prior to taking remedial action. Although not unique in this respect, the fact that AFC principles (and resulting checklist) address both potentially prescriptive topics (such as "sufficient affordable housing is available…") with operational issues requiring an evaluation of conditions on the ground ("Public transportation is reliable and frequent…") may create uncertainty in the minds of planners about how best to apply the principles.

9. Does the AFC checklist make it clear whose responsibility it is to take action on a specific issue? Is the AFC model sufficiently accessible to private sector planners?

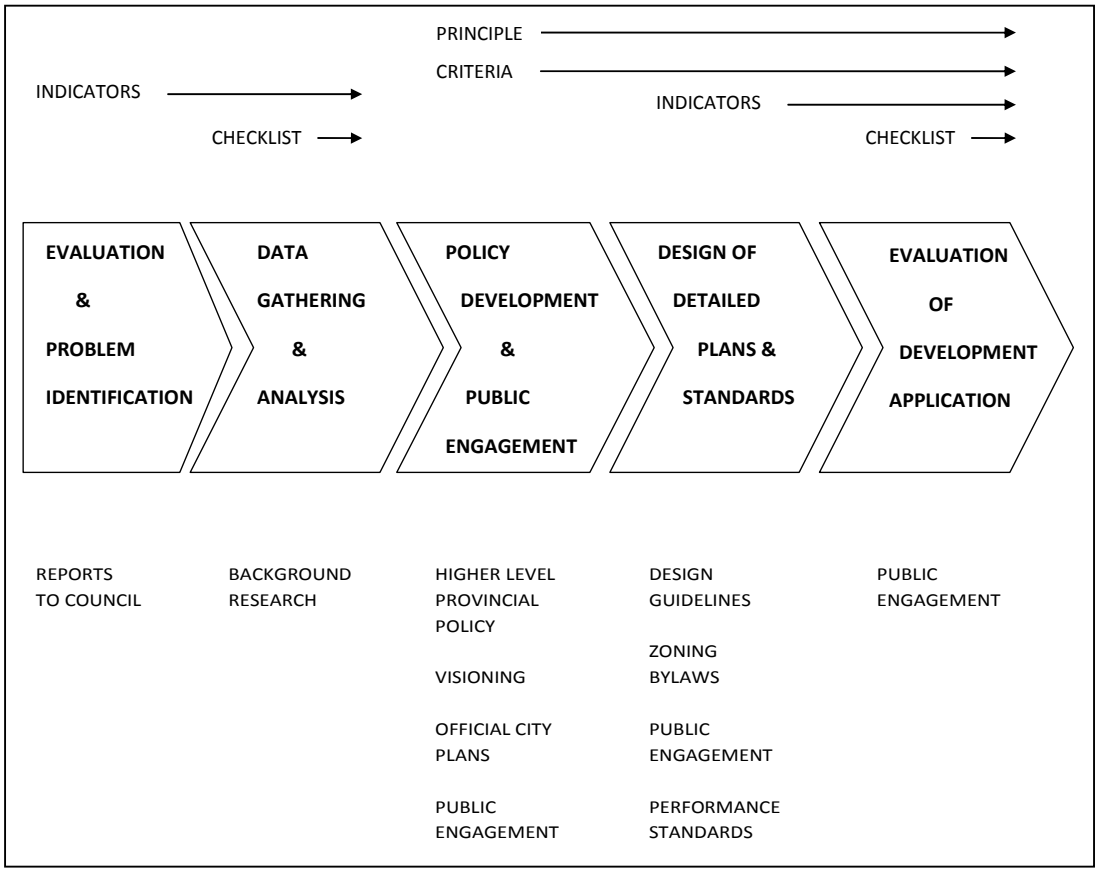
Models such as Smart Growth and New Urbanism cover ground that is well known to planners, so interpretation of the principles is relatively straightforward. Most importantly, a planner working for a regional planning authority can "connect the dots" between the concepts of either of these models and the tasks for which he or she is responsible. Because many of the points covered in the AFC checklist represent an ideal condition related to quality of service, consumer behaviour or the provision of infrastructure that stems from public works standards (e.g. non-slip paving), the fact that the AFC principles and checklist do not identify explicitly or implicitly which agency or department might be responsible for taking action may well be a factor in the slow take up among planning departments.

Concept	Target audience	Approach	Focus
Smart Growth	Planning professionals, other disciplines and multiple stakeholders	Principles -reflected in Indicators, implemented with Policy, Toolkits	Comprehensive - Built Form, transportation, urban growth boundaries, Ecosystems, fiscal prudence, quality of life
Healthy Communities	Healthcare professionals, multiple disciplines, including planning	Principles – evaluated using Checklist and Rating System, implemented using Toolkits	Holistic - Public health, built form, transportation Infrastructure, with emphasis on public engagement, quality of life
New Urbanism	Planning and design professionals	Specific criteria – measured and evaluated using performance standards	Built Form
Universal Design	Architects, institutional planners and local government	Design Standards	Built Form
Age Friendly Communities	Public health, social services and local government	Checklist, with some use of toolkits	Holistic - Public health, built form, Transportation Infrastructure, access to amenities
Child Friendly Cities	Education administrators, local government and design professionals	Principles evaluated using framework, checklist, indicators. Implemented using toolkits	Equality of access, built form, institutional standards
LEED ND	Planning, architects and other design professionals	Rating System	Built Form, connectivity, energy conservation/efficiency

10. What is the focus of the AFC model and is that focus compatible with the needs of planners?

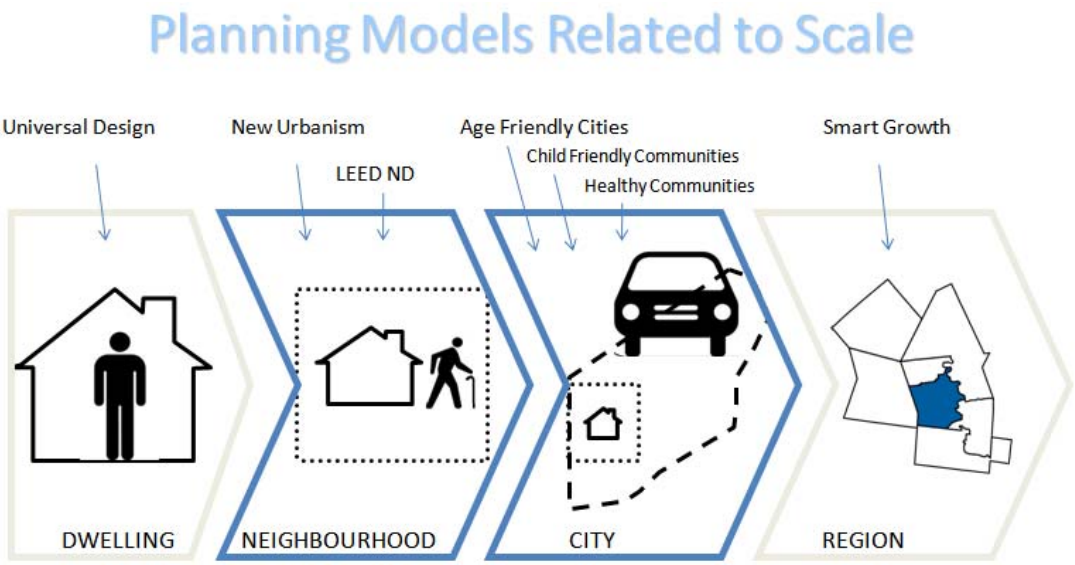
As noted above, almost half of the topics addressed through AFC deal with the benefits of public engagement on issues affecting seniors. While it is true that public engagement has become an essential part of the public planning process (whether for the creation of a new plan or consultation regarding changes in policy in response to development applications), planners rarely undertake public engagement for its own sake, which appears to be the focus of the goals outlined in AFC. From the perspective of municipal government, particularly those departments responsible for issues affecting senior citizens, this makes perfect sense, but is not pertinent to the role of planners in its current configuration.

Relating Planning Tools to the Process



6.0 What would be required to advance AFC as a mainstream planning model?

This analysis has shown that although AFC possesses a number of important qualities that could be useful to certain aspects of mainstream planning activity, as currently configured there are some limitations to the model. These limitations have less to do with the actual content than the fact that AFC is competing with a number of other models that, over time, have shown they have the resilience and depth to facilitate easy implementation – and importantly – adaptability to meet local needs. The graphic below summarizes where most of the models described in this report fall on the continuum of spatial scale. The recommended actions can also be linked to this graphic.



The following five points provide suggestions for how AFC could be adapted to better meet the needs of planners. They could be accommodated in separate documents or within a single comprehensive volume.

1. Prepare a document designed to meet the specific needs of planners working at the provincial or regional level of government. Such a document would seek to bring out the many valuable points inherent within AFC with respect to opportunities for better integration of policy direction, mitigation of the silo effect etc. This document would also be useful as a high level primer to be used in communications with the media and the general public.
2. Prepare a version of AFC that pulls together the complementary aspects of AFC relative to Smart Growth, New Urbanism, LEED ND etc for direct communication with long range planners and policy planners at the municipal level to provide guidance in terms of how AFC can be used to influence and enhance the language and policy direction of official city plans. The document would contain "best practice" suggestions with respect to potential policies to be utilized in the drafting of official city plans, and development of more detailed secondary plans.
3. The third version of AFC would build on work done to date to develop the checklists. Relying on consultations and focus groups, development of such a document would be targeted to municipal urban

designers and their private sector counterparts. It would be important to acknowledge that the majority of the ideas illustrated in the guide are already part of mainstream practice but that this new guide could be useful in modifying the perspective to reflect the specific needs of seniors.

4. A fourth variation on AFC would be focused less on planners and more towards the needs of public works planners (engineers mostly), transportation agencies and the like. This piece would articulate specific areas with respect to standards. Building on disability guidelines already in the public domain and the concepts of Universal Design, this would be an opportunity to link with researchers carrying out evidence-based evaluation of appropriate standards. An example would be the work being done by the Rehabilitation Institute in Toronto by Dr Geoff Ferny, who is evaluating new approaches to curb cut design pioneered in Europe that overcome the climate-related drawbacks of the current designs. As low floor, accessible transit vehicles become increasingly ubiquitous, tackling some of the practical implementation issues related to station design would be beneficial.

5. Finally, and possibly the most important of all in terms of reaching out to a large constituency that could benefit from new inspiration, a document should be prepared that provides a comprehensive set of criteria in the form of a modified checklist for the benefit of development control planners. This has its auspices in policies established in official city plans but is specifically geared to the planners whose responsibilities include commenting on and evaluating new project designs. Such a document would also be extremely valuable to the private sector, because it would give private consultants and their developer clients an indication of what public sector agencies expect and require.

With each new development, we are building the cities and communities of the future, so it is important to influence planning practice to be sensitive and responsive to the needs of seniors and people of all ages.

This report has covered a lot of ground and identified a number of challenges with respect to making AFC more attractive to the planning community. It has also illustrated some paths that could be followed to assist with presenting AFC as compatible and complementary to traditional planning practice.

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